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REMARKS

Claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-16 remain pending in the application.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 1, 3-10, and 15-16.

Claims 11-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0101871 to Takase et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,711,168 to Yoshizawa et al.

Applicants respectfully point out to the Examiner that the present application is a continuation of International Application Number PCT/JP99/02826, and, therefore, claims domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and 363. And accordingly, the requirement enumerated in 35 CFR § 1.55(4) does not apply to the present application. Applicants, nevertheless, submit a copy of the parent application, as filed, and a copy of a verified English translation of the parent application to perfect the domestic priority claim pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 365(c).

As discussed before, Yoshizawa et al. was filed on October 19, 1999 and issued on March 23, 2004, and was, therefore, filed and made public after the May 28, 1999 priority date for the present application. The priority application of Yoshizawa et al. was not published until May 30, 2000 under Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2000-151609, which was also after the priority date of this application. As such, Yoshizawa et al. is not prior art to the present application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the §103 rejection of claims 11-14.

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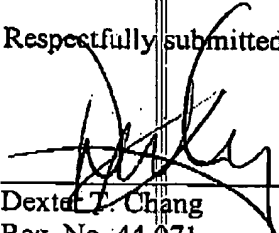
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In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



Dexter T. Chang
Reg. No. 44,071

CUSTOMER NUMBER 026304
Telephone: (212) 940-6384
Fax: (212) 940-8986 or 8987
Docket No.: 100794-00065 (FUJS 19.137)
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